



Annual Report
of the
Medical Officer of Health
for the
Borough of Wilton
For the Year 1944.

SANITARY AND HEALTH OFFICIALS.

Medical Officer of Health.

G. NAPIER, B.Sc. (Hons), M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., C.T.M. & H.

Phone: Wilton 108
Stapleford 237

Sanitary Inspector.

T. DAVID,
Phone: Wilton 108.



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ANNUAL REPORT.

General Description of the Borough of Wilton.

This ancient little Borough has a population of two thousand, four hundred and sixty-five; a population that has remained more or less stationary for many years now.

Beyond the two small factories in the Borough, a felt mill and a carper factory, the town is largely of the character of a market town, the tradesmen supplying the neighbouring rural area as well as the local inhabitants.

The population is employed in the two factories mentioned above, in the shops locally and in Salisbury shops, on the railway, on the County Council staff, and in diverse pursuits in Salisbury and elsewhere in the vicinity. The town and its inhabitants are not greatly subject to fluctuations in circumstances and are in fact moderately and quietly prosperous.

Though many of the houses in the Borough are old-fashioned and their surroundings cramped, there are, with one exception, no rows of actual slum property in the town. There is, however, in spite of the fact that the Council have already built one hundred and sixteen houses, an insistent and justifiable demand for many more additional houses as well as houses to replace at least part of the sub-standard houses of which there are unfortunately a large number, and to allow of the reconstruction of the remainder of these sub-standard dwellings.

There has not been in the Borough for many years any outstanding cause of exceptional mortality. There are rarely any deaths from infectious disease, from causes associated with child-birth or from industrial diseases.

Details of Services, etc.

Population	...	2465
Acreage	...	2681
Inhabited Houses	...	766
Working-class Houses		528
Council Houses	...	116
Rateable Value	...	£12,885
Product of Penny Rate		£49
Industries and Trades		Wilton Royal Carpet Felt Mills
Gas Supply	...	Salisbury Gas Co.
Electric Light	..	Salisbury
Highways	...	Wilts County Council
Refuse Disposal	...	Salisbury & Wilton R.D.C.
Sewage Disposal	...	Piped to works out- side the Borough; disposed of by Salisbury City

VITAL STATISTICS.

Births.

Forty nine children were born in 1944, of these 22 were male and 27 were female.

The birth-rate was 19·9, which compares with a birth-rate of 13·9 last year and with the figure of 17·6 given by the Registrar General for England and Wales. It should be noted that 7 out of the 49 born were illegitimate. The following are the figures for 1944:—

	Total	M.	F.	} Birth Rate per 1004 of estim- ated resident population 12
Live Births—Legitimate	42	20	22	
Illegitimate	7	2	5	
Still Births—Legitimate	1	0	1	} Rate per 1000 live & still births 20
Illegitimate	0	0	0	

The general death rate has gone up this year as well as the birth rate. The slight increase in the death rate is due to numerous deaths of very aged persons during the cold spell at the end of the year. Deaths among younger persons is as usual. The following are the details:—

Total	M.	F.	}	Death Rate per 1000
36	14	22		estimated resident population 14'6

Deaths from puerperal causes—

		Rate per 1000 (live and still) births
Puerperal sepsis	0	0
Other Puereral causes	0	0
Total	0	0

Infants under one year—

Number of deaths	—	3
All infants per 8000 live births		62
Legitimate infants per 1000 legitimate live births		40
Illegitimate infants per 1000 illegitimate live births		143

Other causes of death—

Deaths from Cancer	...	4
„ Measles	...	0
„ Whooping Cough		0
„ Infantile Diarrhæa		0

The following were the chief causes of death—

	1942	1943	1944
Heart Disease	21%	28%	78%
Cancer	14%	15%	11%
Tuberculosis	2%	3%	2%

N.B.—It will be seen from the above that there was no epidemic causing deaths and that the deaths recorded were almost entirely confined to the older inhabitants.

SECTION B.

General Provision of Health Services for the Borough.

The Medical Officer spends his whole time in Public Health work, being also Medical Officer for the neighbouring Rural districts of Salisbury and Wilton, and Mere and Tisbury. His qualifications are Bachelor of Science (Honours Degree), St. Andrew's; Bachelor of Medicine and of Surgery; Diploma of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, England, in Public Health; Certificate of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, London, etc.

There is a fully qualified Sanitary Inspector who devotes his whole time to Borough work. He holds the Certificate of the Royal Sanitary Institute, and the Meat Inspector's Certificate.

Contribution is made to these officers' salaries under the Public Health Acts.

The Medical Officer in charge of the Infant Welfare and Austenstal clinics during the year was Dr. Straton, of West Lodge, Wilton. Dr. Straton was also the Public Vaccinator to the area.

Other Officers—Midwives.

There are two nurses engaged for maternity work in Wilton and district. They also act as School Nurses. They are responsible to an association working in conjunction with the Wilts County Nursing Association and the County M.O.H.

Nursing in the Home.

This is undertaken to a certain extent by the two nurses mentioned above.

Laboratory Facilities.

Examination of swabs and other bacteriological work is carried out at the Greville Laboratory at Salisbury Infirmary. The laboratory is recognised for the examination of milk by the Ministry of Health. Work here is most satisfactorily and promptly carried out.

Legislation in force in the Area,

There are bye-laws in force in connection with "Cleansing of Footways and Pavements," "Cleansing of Earth-closets, Privies, Ashpits and Cesspools"; for dealing with "Nuisances arising from Snow, etc."; for the keeping of animals and of slaughter houses; and also regarding cemetery management. Building bye-laws were adopted on 27th August, 1942.

Hospital Service available for the Area.

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|----------------------|--|
| 1. Infectious Fevers | Joint District Isolation
Hospital, Old Sarum |
| 2. General cases | General Infirmary,
Salisbury |
| 3. Children | No special hospital is provided by the Authority or by the County. A Convalescent Home is available at
Marlborough |
| 4. Maternity | Beds are available at
Salisbury Infirmary, and during the war at
Netherhampton |
| 5. Venereal Disease | Salisbury Infirmary Clinic |
| 6. Tuberculosis | Winsley Sanatorium and Harnwood Hospital take the majority of cases. Beds may also be had through the County Council at Alton and at Savernake or at Bath Orthopædic Hospital. Recently a number of cases have been admitted to the Isolation Hosp., Old Sarum |
| 7. Chronic Sick | Provision is arranged for these at Tower House, etc. |
| 8. Orthopædic | Clinics are held in Salisbury Infirmary and hospital treatment is provided at Bath Orthopædic Hospital |

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|---|---|
| 9. Mental Cases | Special schools outside the County, or County Institutional treatment |
| 10. Puerperal Fever,
Puerperal Pyrexia
Ophthalmia
Neonstorum | Arrangements are made and consultation offered by the County Council |
| 11. Ear, Nose and
Throat Cases | Salisbury Infirmary |

Hospital Service as a whole.

There are no hospitals or nursing homes in the small town itself, and none are necessary, the present arrangements being satisfactory and the area being well served. The maternal mortality has been for many years now nil.

Clinics and Treatment Centres.

I INFANT WELFARE. A centre is provided by a committee of ladies, supported by voluntary contributions and by the payment of a small fee and by subsidy. Ante-natal work is also carried on.

There are no schools clinics for the district, neither are there day nurseries or light clinics.

SECTION C.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

Water Supply.

Wilton has a water supply which is both adequate in quantity and satisfactory in quality. Monthly samples are taken and with few exceptions the report is "no trace of pollution." Where there is slight pollution the sample on being retaken is invariably quite pure. These samples are taken before chlorination.

General Description of the Waterworks. etc.

On 25/8/45, Messrs. Herbert Lapworth, in connection with the question of a new housing estate in the vicinity of the Public Water Supply, submitted a report from which extracts are given below

The Water Supply at Ditchampton is derived from

a well in the chalk. The geological section of the well gives 5 feet of gravel overlying the chalk.

The depth of the well is 27ft., measuring from the engine house floor. The well consists of a top portion 13ft. in diameter and 11ft. 9in. deep. This is lined with brickwork rendered with Sika cement to about 4ft. from the bottom of the well. An inspection showed that, except for a few patches in the lower part of the wall where the brickwork is bulging, that the brickwork was in good condition.

The water is pumped by duplicate Diesel driven pumps to the reservoir over the pumping station, whence it gravitates to the town. These pumps are capable of pumping about 10,000 gallons an hour. It is proposed to install a new electrically driven pump shortly. The water is chlorinated by the chloramine process (chlorine and ammonia) before leaving the pumping station.

The "rest-level" of the water in the well, obtained after the pumps have been standing overnight, is normally 19ft. from the engine house floor. During pumping the water level is usually lowered to about 23ft. from the surface. At the present time owing to drought the water is pumped from a depth of 25ft.

Suggested Protection Area.

It is necessary to define an area around the well in which surface pollution should be regarded as dangerous. This cannot be a matter for precise calculation but we think that any point within 1,000 ft. of the well should be regarded as a potential source of danger.

Suggested Precautions.

- (a) Any further building should be prohibited.
- (b) A search should be made for any disused wells. If any such disused wells are found, they should be filled in, preferably with sand, and covered over.
- (c) Farmyards containing large quantities of manure should be prohibited, or if allowed, the surface of the stable yard should be covered with concrete and a cast iron drain laid to the nearest sewer.

This particularly applies to the stable yard at Ditchampton Farm.

(d) Heavy manuring of gardens should also be prohibited.

(e) All sewers should be constructed of cast iron, which is less liable to damage than stoneware pipes. The eight inch sewer down the main road has already been relaid in cast iron.

Other suggestions made were periodical examination of the well lining, daily colour testing of the amount of residual chlorine.

The effect of the above report was to make the Council decide to give up a proposed site and move to one outside the prescribed area for their new housing area. The other matters were considered, including that concerning the Waterworks cottage, which was relaid in iron, being previously a stoneware one.

The source of supply for a large private estate providing water to farms and outlying rural cottages has for long been under suspicion. This year the estate had a borehole sunk into the chalk and found a satisfactory yield with a high standard of purity. All that now remains to make this private scheme suitable in all respects, is to link up the new borehole with the older system of mains, and after an original chlorination to cleanse the entire system, the supply should be both suitable and satisfactory.

Water supplies to two groups of cottages came under review. The wells in both cases were the cause of the trouble. One has been cleaned, with new rendering of the inside wall of the well, with improved pumps, cover and the paving with concrete of the surrounding yard. In the case of the second well, labour is holding up the contractor.

Drains and Sewers.

Advantage was taken of the extension of the sewer by the military authorities to bring four cottages on to the sewer which had previously relied upon a septic tank system of soil disposal.

The drainage systems at 25 premises were improved, repaired or cleansed. All new work was subject to inspection and test.

Refuse Collection and Disposal.

For some time now the Council has been concerned with the unsatisfactory vehicle used for collecting refuse in the town. At last it seems possible to obtain a properly constructed vehicle for the work, and the Contractor has been asked to provide same.

For the past five years, disposal of refuse has been effected by controlled tipping within the City of Salisbury. That method is now no longer possible and it appears that a small refuse destructor will have to be established at Wilton. This is somewhat unfortunate but cannot be helped and will need fairly close supervision to ensure freedom from recurring nuisance.

Nuisances.

Complaints were received of nuisances at 21 premises. Upon inspection and informal action, all were abated.

Meat and Food Inspection.

No slaughtering of food animals is carried on in the Borough with the exception of an occasional cottager's pig. Food shops are inspected from time to time. The following foodstuffs were condemned as unfit:—

18	tins	of	Canned	Meats.
30	"	"	"	Milks.
34	"	"	"	Vegetables.
19	"	"	"	Fruits.
25	"	"	"	Fish.
1	"	"	"	Syrup.
17	lbs.	of	Butter.	
1	lb.	of	Margarine.	
56	lbs.		Cereal	Wheat.
54	lbs.		Beef.	
82	lbs.		Jam.	
52	dozen		Eggs.	
200	lbs.		of	Vegetables.

Bake-houses.

The four Bake-houses in the town were regularly inspected. The routine limewashings were carried out.

Factories.

The sanitary accommodation at the two local factories was inspected, as well as "the means of escape in case of fire."

Milk and Dairies.

Four farms in the Borough are engaged in milk production, 3 T.T. and 1 Accredited. Of the former, milking parlours were constructed at two of the farms, with milking being done by machine. At the other T.T. farm, which runs two herds, one as a permanent 'bail' herd and the second on the bail in summer and using the farm sheds and dairy in the winter. Hand milking is carried on at the Accredited dairy. All farms have concrete yards, buildings are in good condition. Sampling of the milk is carried out quarterly and with one excepted period, the results were always within the standards laid down for the designated grades of milk.

Housing.

A start was made on the survey of the forty or so agricultural cottages situated within the Borough. In the main they are structurally sound, but lack modern amenities such as sinks, baths and drainage. They all belong to one large estate, and when the survey is completed, the owners will meet the Council representatives to decide what can be done to bring the cottages up to the standard usually expected in town properties.

The Council's scheme for the building of 56 new houses to accommodate persons from condemned and over-crowded premises is still postponed.

There is a constant temptation for condemned houses to be re-let and action had to be taken in three cases where this was done without the prior sanction of the Council being obtained.

After having three possible sites for post-war housing turned down for one reason or another, the Council at last obtained a site at Ditchampton, which will eventually accommodate about a hundred houses. It stands on the extreme edge of the town, but otherwise is a healthy

and attractive site. It was hoped to build 25 houses within the first year after the end of the war in Europe, with another 25 in the second year. The local builders' Federation have offered their services and it is expected that when final clearance is given, building work will start on the permanent houses.

A survey was made of the 116 Council houses in the town. In the main the houses are standing up to wear and tear fairly well. In each case, however, there appear to be grave defects in individual items, such as partition wall, chimneys, steel frame windows, etc. A full report was made on these defects to the Council and where possible remedial action has been taken. A great deal will have to be spent on these premises when building costs come down, in the shape of painting of external and internal woodwork, paths, fences, etc. Much trouble has been experienced with drains at Council houses, due chiefly to carelessness or wanton mis-use, with obstructions caused by rags and tins. In the main, however, the Council is singularly fortunate in their tenants, who as far as they are able, look after the property tolerably well.

Overcrowding.

One gross case of overcrowding occurred during the year and after informal action, the second family was persuaded to move out and the nuisance abated.

Abbreviated Report on Work done under the Public Health and Housing Acts.

1. Inspection of Dwelling Houses :—

No. of houses inspected for defects	91
No. of Inspections made for the purpose	227
2. Remedy of defects with formal notice :—

No. rendered fit as a result of informal action	71
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3. No. of dwelling houses grossly overcrowded 1
4. No. of Statutory Notices served Nil

Infectious Diseases.

Two cases of scarlet fever were notified during the year, one being nursed at home and the other at the Isolation Hospital.

No cases of Diphtheria were notified.

The Medical Officer arranged one session for the further immunisation of children who had not already been treated. Seventeen children attended.

G. NAPIER.

